



Can You Avoid Getting Cataracts?

Short answer: no.

Longer answer: We still don't know much about why cataracts develop in our eyes; but when it comes to prevention, adopting healthy habits can't hurt. Live long enough, though, and chances are you'll eventually have cataracts. They're the world's number one cause of blindness.

First of all, what's a cataract?

It's an area of clouding inside the lens of your eye. The clouding is caused by the abnormal clumping of proteins that are normally arranged so as to keep your lens transparent. Think of what happens when an egg white is cooking and you'll get the basic idea.

How would I know if I had cataracts?

This can be tricky, because there are several changes in vision that can come with aging. Cataracts can start developing in our 40s and 50s, but vision impairment might not be noticeable for another couple of decades. As cataracts grow, you may notice changes in your vision:

- it becomes cloudy or blurry;
- colors look faded or tinted;
- poor night vision;
- lamps, headlights and sunlight seem too bright;
- seeing double;
- frequent changes in your eyeglass prescription.

Cataracts are certainly common. By age 80, half of Americans either will have cataracts, or will have undergone surgery to remove cataracts.

(continued on page 3)

Todd N. Tancredi
Director

fastest-growing senior populations. When it comes to residents over the age of 60, we're at about 54,000 - and growing faster than the county's population as a whole.



Counting as many of our seniors as can be reached is especially important this year, during the 2020 United States Census. Ten years ago, 76 percent of the county's households mailed back their census questionnaires. The Census Bureau had to count the rest in person - and that's where people were likely to have been missed or mis-counted. We're aiming for an improved response rate, especially in hard-to-count areas of the county.

Nearly every household will receive an invitation to participate in the 2020 Census, from either a postal worker or a census worker. Most of the time, that invitation will come in the mail, but a few of you will get an in-person visit. Look for your invitation on or between March 12-20.

This year you'll be able to respond to the Census invitation online, on the phone, or via a paper questionnaire.

You can find out a lot more about this year's Census in this issue of the Spotlight, on pages 3 and 6. Visit www.dutchessny.gov/Census2020 to learn even more!

**YOU COUNT -
BE COUNTED!**
IN DUTCHESS COUNTY
CENSUS 2020



Sincerely,

Marcus J. Molinaro
County Executive

Volunteer Drivers (and Other Helpers) Wanted

The Office for the Aging is looking for volunteers to help deliver meals to homebound seniors throughout Dutchess County in our Home Delivered Meals (HDM) program.

Most volunteer drivers deliver on late-morning routes that take no more than one hour to complete. Volunteer HDM drivers often serve as a homebound senior's only contact with the outside world, so you'll be helping seniors fight isolation as well as helping provide nutritionally sound meals.

Volunteers are needed everywhere in Dutchess County, especially in rural areas. We can work with your schedule, including vacations, and mileage is reimbursed for HDM drivers who use their personal vehicles to make deliveries.

To learn more about becoming a volunteer HDM driver, contact OFA Nutrition Services Coordinator Nimesh Bhargava at **(845) 486-2545** or nbhargava@dutchessny.gov.

What if you want to volunteer, but driving's not the way you want to help? We have plenty of other options, for volunteers of all ages. Keep reading...

OFFICE FOR THE AGING SENIOR FRIENDSHIP CENTERS

Beacon - 838-4871

East Fishkill - 226-3605

Millerton - (518) 789-3081

Pawling - 855-9308

City of Poughkeepsie - 486-2564

Red Hook - 475-1129

South Amenia - 275-2661

Tri-Town (Towns of Poughkeepsie,
Pleasant Valley & LaGrange) - 275-8565

(845 area code unless otherwise indicated)

Other Ways You Can Help

If you received this *Spotlight on Seniors* in the mail, chances are it was prepared for delivery by an Office for the Aging volunteer. They put together almost 2,000 issues of the *Spotlight*. There's a lot of folding and labeling involved, and if those kind of clerical activities are your strength, we'd love to hear from you.

There are also opportunities to volunteer as an OFA health insurance counselor. You'll receive continuous training on helping seniors decide which health insurance choices best meet their needs.

Later this year, when it's warmer, we'd love to have your help at any or all of the 12 OFA Senior Picnics, which take place between Memorial Day and Labor Day. These summer picnics are traditionally an excellent opportunity for active senior volunteers. They're also a great intergenerational experience opportunity for teenage volunteers.

We're also on a continuous search for volunteer leaders for our Tai Chi, Senior Exercise, A Matter of Balance and Brain Games classes.

For more on all these and other volunteering opportunities, email bjones@dutchessny.gov or call **(845) 486-2544**.

SPOTLIGHT ON SENIORS

Marcus J. Molinaro — County Executive
Todd N. Tancredi — Director, Office for the Aging
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114 Delafield St., Poughkeepsie NY 12601

(845) 486-2555 / toll free (866) 486-2555

Email: ofa@dutchessny.gov
Web: www.dutchessny.gov/aging

Available for free at libraries, senior centers and municipal buildings throughout Dutchess County.

Distributed in February, May, August and December, with a Medicare-focused edition in September.

To be added to or removed from our mailing list, call (845) 486-2544 or email bjones@dutchessny.gov.

Cataracts

(continued from front page)

Can I prevent cataracts?

Not entirely, but it may be possible to delay them with healthier habits.

Quitting smoking can help, along with a diet rich in dark, leafy greens.

When you go outside, sunglasses paired with a hat with a brim can block the sun.

Talk to your eye doctor. Over age 60, a dilated eye exam is recommended at least once every two years.

But if your cataracts start to get in the way of day-to-day activities like driving and reading, your eye doctor might recommend surgery. Talk over your options with your doctor, to get the best possible sense of surgery's benefits and risks.

And if cataracts are common in your family, encourage other family members to get checked as well.

What's cataract surgery like?

The median age of a cataract surgery patient is now around 65. That's down by about a decade from 10-15 years ago, according to the National Institutes of Health. There are several reasons for patients choosing earlier cataract surgery. First, the surgery is safer than in previous years, with over 3.5 million procedures performed every year. The American Academy of Ophthalmology reports the risk of serious complications has dropped to between 1 and 4 percent. Additionally, experts say patients in their 50s and 60s aren't as willing to wait for their eyesight to worsen before choosing surgery. Younger patients tend to be more active, and thus more likely to have the surgery so that they can continue being active. A younger patient is more likely to heal quickly, and will enjoy improved vision for more of their remaining years.

For some, there may be an improvement in independence. At the 2019 meeting of the American Academy of Ophthalmology, Australian researchers described findings that automobile crashes and near misses decreased by almost 50% after surgery.

OFFICE FOR THE AGING 28th ANNUAL SENIOR PICNICS

Watch your mailbox this spring and summer!

Every registered voter in Dutchess County over age 60 will receive an invitation to make a reservation for these free picnics. We hold 12 picnics during the summer, starting after Memorial Day and ending before Labor Day, serving every community in Dutchess County.

Picnic attendees will enjoy a nutritious lunch, fun with friends, great live music, information from OFA staff, opportunities to speak with your community's elected officials, and more!

Invitations will arrive about 4-6 weeks before each picnic.

Space at the picnics is limited, thus reservations are required.

The picnic schedule will be available at www.dutchessny.gov, and in the summer issue of the *Spotlight on Seniors*.

If you are over age 60 but don't receive a mailed invitation, you can still make a reservation for yourself at the picnic serving your community.

Office for the Aging Senior Picnics are a great way for new arrivals to get to know their neighbors and officials, as well as the Office for the Aging.

2019 BY THE NUMBERS

In conjunction with our community partners and volunteers, the Office for the Aging provided a wide variety of services to the older adults of Dutchess County in 2019:

Overall Service	13,000+ individual seniors served
Home Delivered Meals	136,607 meals delivered to 573 homebound clients
Congregate Meals	39,351 meals at 8 Senior Friendship Centers and 12 picnics
Nutrition Education	104 hours of individual nutrition counseling; 22,339 pieces of Nutrition Education material distributed
Nursing/Case Management	1,690 field visits to community-based, long-term care clients
Legal Services	642 hours of legal service to 301 clients
Home Care	36,147 hours of home care to 368 non-Medicaid clients
Reception	34,266 phone calls and 5,267 walk-ins assisted
Medicare Workshops	Conducted 52 workshops for 452 residents and mailed out 1,890 Medicare "Spotlight on Seniors" editions
PERS Units	374 Emergency Response Units to non-Medicaid clients
HEAP	853 Home Energy Assistance applications processed
Intake / NY Connects	6,415 intakes received
Caregiver Support	705 units of workshops, training and support to caregivers
Transportation	26,140 units of transportation to medical appts., shopping
Outreach Events	101 community outreach events on a variety of topics
Senior Picnics (summer)	12 senior picnics held throughout the county
Farmer's Market Coupons	Distributed 1,000 coupon books to low-income seniors
Prescription Drug Collection	255 pounds of outdated medication collected at senior picnics
Senior Prom (October)	450 people attended
Celebration of Aging (May)	290 people attended
Senior Seminar Day (Nov.)	110 people attended
Website	376,831 hits

The Celebration of Aging

**Monday, May 18th
12 p.m.**

**Villa Borghese, 70 Widmer Road, Wappingers Falls
featuring a delicious hot lunch buffet**

Reserve by May 8th for just \$25 per person

(\$40 per person after May 8th)

Guests over the age of 100 in 2020 and their guest are free!

Couples married 70 years or more in 2020 are free too!

Presentation of the 2020 Senior Citizens of the Year!

Recognition of Dutchess County Centenarians!

Recognition of couples married for 70+ years!

RESERVE MY SEAT!

Please reserve my seat for the 2019 Celebration of Aging on Monday, May 18th, at noon at the Villa Borghese in Wappinger. Enclosed please find my check made out to the Office for the Aging. Tickets are \$25 if paid by May 8th, and \$40 after.

Please print.

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Daytime Phone _____ Email (if any) _____

Please reserve _____ seats at \$25 each (\$40 if received after May 8th)

Mail form and check to: Office for the Aging, 114 Delafield Street, Poughkeepsie, 12601

We regret that Dutchess County is unable to provide refunds.

A New Phone Scam

Yes, again - but this scam will be familiar to those of you who are prepared. We'd appreciate you spreading the word to friends and neighbors, especially if they're seniors living alone who are often targeted by scammers.

What You Might Already Know...

You may be familiar with phone scammers' tactics. They'll say your Social Security has been "cancelled." They'll claim the IRS wants \$2,000 in iTunes cards or else. They'll claim to be a grandchild who's in trouble with the law. And so forth.

You may also know that the best way to deal with these calls is not to pick up in the first place, and to hang up right away when you sense a possible scam.

It may be easy for you to detect and dismiss these scam attempts, but that's not the case for everybody. That's why we're asking you to spread the word about this new scam, along with the established ones.

...But Here's The New Scam

This year, scammers are attempting to piggyback on the 2020 U.S. Census, taking place in the spring. Scammers have been calling people, impersonating Census workers and in some cases threatening people with arrest if they don't reveal personal or financial information.

Here's one important piece of information you can share with friends, family and neighbors:

The Census Bureau is not contacting people over the phone, or through email. In most cases, they're using the U.S. mail to invite people to participate. In a few cases, invitations are being hand-delivered. You will be able to respond online, over the phone, or with a paper questionnaire. The Census Bureau will follow up as needed in March and April with reminder postcards and letters. After that, they'll follow up in person at your home in May, June or July.

Other Census scams

The Census Bureau never asks for your full Social Security number; money or donations; anything on behalf of a political party, candidate or cause; full bank or credit card account numbers; or your mother's maiden name.

Census field representatives may collect information, going door-to-door.

How do I know the person at my door is legitimate?

Here are some ways to verify an individual visiting you is a Census Bureau employee:

- The census taker or field representative will present an ID badge that includes their name, their photograph, a US Department of Commerce watermark, and an expiration date.
- They'll have an official bag and Census Bureau-issued electronic device bearing the Census logo.
- Census takers and field representatives will work only between the hours of 9 a.m. and 9 p.m.
- Census representatives will be at local organizations and community events with computer tablets, to help individuals respond to the Census online.

What will happen to the personal information that's collected?

Personally identifiable information stays sealed for 72 years. It cannot be sold or shared with anyone other than the person named in the record or their heir. Other government agencies cannot access this information.

That means the personal information you give to the Census this year won't be publicly available until it's released by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) on April 2, 2092.

If you're curious about genealogy, the NARA website (www.archives.gov) maintains Census records up to 1940, along with many free databases and research tools.

Census records from 1950 will go public in 2022.

Spring Learning Opportunities in Rhinebeck and Fishkill

The Office for the Aging is among the many agencies participating in two spring events of interest to seniors, their families and caregivers.

On Saturday, April 18th, we'll be at Rhinebeck High School for a series of seminars called "Extra Credit in Rhinebeck."

Topics to be covered include elder law, universal design, podiatry, and caregiver support. County Executive Marcus Molinaro is also scheduled to be there to answer your questions.

You can register for the event by contacting the Office for the Aging at (845) 486-2555.

On Saturday, May 2nd, OFA will take part in an event organized by Trinity Episcopal Church in Fishkill. "Smarter Aging: More Planning, Less Worry" will be a one-stop shop with experienced professionals from multiple areas of elder caregiving. Office for the Aging Outreach Coordinator Brian Jones will be a presenter.

You'll find valuable information and guidance at both events.

For more information about each event, join the OFA's e-mail list for our weekly "Aging News" newsletter. For more information, email bjones@dutchessny.gov.

Those without internet access can read OFA's "Golden Living" column in any one of several local newspapers:

- Beacon Free Press
- The Hudson Valley News
- Millerton News
- Northern Dutchess News
- Pawling Record
- Southern Dutchess News

If your organization would like an OFA representative to speak at one of your gatherings, contact OFA Outreach Coordinator Brian Jones using the email address above, or by calling him directly at **(845) 486-2544**. Our speakers cover topics including nutrition, housing, successful aging, scam prevention and much more.

From The Director's Chair



Todd Tancredi
ttancredi@dutchessny.gov

Friends,

Four years ago, my first day as Office for the Aging Director coincided with what has become one of my favorite events, the annual Celebration of Aging, taking place this year on Monday, May 18th.

It's a chance for us to hear the wonderful stories of Dutchess County residents who have reached the age of 100 or more, or who have been married 70 years or more. Just as importantly, it's an opportunity to thank some special senior volunteers for decades of quiet service to the county's aging population.

You may know an individual who has achieved one of these amazing feats of aging - or even both. We'd love to give them their moment in the sun to enjoy the praise of a grateful community. You likely saw more information about the Celebration of Aging on page 5.

After the Celebration of Aging, we have a busy summer in store for the seniors of Dutchess County. There's the Senior Picnic season that will begin right after Memorial Day. Whether you're a senior who's new to the county, or a lifetime county resident, a Senior Picnic is a great way to meet your new neighbors and local elected officials.

For teenagers, volunteering at a Senior Picnic is a fine way to meet the community service requirements of their school or house of worship.

Prospective volunteers of all ages can get in touch with the Office for the Aging to find out more about helping your senior friends and neighbors.

My best,

Todd Tancredi
 Director, Office for the Aging

Dutchess County Office for the Aging
114 Delafield Street, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601

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Medicare Website Orientation and Medicare 101

We offer a basic overview of the Medicare.gov website for people approaching the age of 65, caregivers, and anyone who would like a better understanding of how Medicare works. Classes take place 9:30-11:00 a.m. at the Adriaance Library in the City of Poughkeepsie (93 Market St.), on the following dates:

March 25th, May 27th, July 22nd

Our "Medicare 101" classes will be held on the third Wednesday of each month from 10 a.m.-noon at the community room at the Poughkeepsie Galleria:

March 18th, April 15th, May 20th, June 17th

"Medicare 101" classes will also be held on the fourth Monday of each month (except May and December) at 4 p.m. at the Center for Healthy Aging, 6527 Springbrook Ave. (Route 9) in Rhinebeck:

March 23rd, April 27th, June 22nd, July 27th

There is no charge for any of these orientation sessions, but space is limited. Please call (845) 486-2555 to make a reservation.

For more information
about the
Dutchess County
Office for the Aging,
visit us online at
www.dutchessny.gov/aging

email

ofa@dutchessny.gov

call

(845) 486-2555
or **(866) 486-2555**

or mail

**Dutchess County
Office for the Aging
114 Delafield St.
Poughkeepsie NY 12601**

We're open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Monday through Friday.